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ABSTRACT

Methods that can be used by administrators to provide flexibility in dealing with the issue of high faculty-tenure ratios were investigated, based on a literature review and a telephone survey of 22 major public research universities. Analysis of methods cited in the literature and by surveyed administrators to enable flexibility in the appointment of new faculty while also providing faculty academic freedom and a sense of security indicated the importance of careful planning, which starts at the departmental level and depends on teamwork of students, faculty, and administrators. Planning involves an understanding of the role and mission of the institution, an assessment of each department, and discovering ways to improve the quality of programs within the constraints of the budget. Nine methods reported in the literature that were not practiced by the universities are as follows: systemwide tenure, contracts for service, quotas on tenure, limited tenure for administrators, flexible ranks, new roles for senior faculty, increased faculty workload, increased use of part-time faculty, and having every major academic unit generate its own resources. Four methods reported by the university respondents that were not found in the literature are as follows: increased pretenure period to greater than seven years: deny tenure even in the seventh year in the case of declining demand: shared faculty resources with other departments and/or campuses: allowing a department an extra mortaged position to tenure an excellent faculty member, but taking away this position when another tenured position becomes vacant. A bibliography is appended. (SW)

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FACULTY TENURE AND MANAGEMENT FLEXIBILITY

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THE ASSOCIATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

This paper was presented at the Twenty-First Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research held at the Leamington Hotel in Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 17-20, 1981. This paper was reviewed by the AIR Forum Publications Committee and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC Collection of Forum Papers.

Mary Corcoran
University of Minnesota
(Editor, AIR Forum Publications)

ABSTRACT

This study examined various methods of coping with the issue of high faculty-tenure ratios at major research universities nationwide. High tenure ratios could limit the amount of management flexibility needed to maintain quality programs in an era of shrinking resources in higher education. These methods of providing flexibility were obtained from a literature review and a telephone survey of twenty-two leading research universities. The problem facing administrators is to provide flexibility, which rests on the ability to appoint new faculty, and at the same time to provide faculty with academic freedom and a sense of security. While this seems to be an insurmountable task, there are viable solutions.

The issue of tenure and management flexibility has surfaced nationally in the last few years as the result of declining enrollments and limited resources in higher education. The problem facing administrators is to provide faculty members with their rights to academic freedom and a reasonable sense of security. At the same time, it is necessary to maintain enough flexibility to modify the curriculum and add faculty resources in areas of need.

The purpose of this study was to examine these issues and to discover methods that can be used by administrators to provide flexibility in the management of programs. Research consisted of a literature review on the subject of faculty tenure and management flexibility in higher education, and a telephone survey of twenty-two major research universities nationwide.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The report, Faculty Tenure, prepared by the Commission on Academic Tenure in Higher Education and published in 1973 offers extensive insight into the history, value and proper management of faculty tenure. Members of the Commission urged institutions with tenure plans to retain them and work toward necessary improvements. They made the following recommendations concerning the management of tenure:

1. Governing boards should insist on strong staffing plans and regular reports on these plans--present and projected distribution of faculty by rank, age, sex, ethnic background, field of study, and the like.
2. Authority and responsibility for personnel policies and practices should be assigned to individual institutions. The role of central administration should be held to a minimum in a multicampus institution.

3. Tenure should be granted in the individual campus and not in the system as a whole in a multicampus institution.
4. Policies and procedures should be established for the transfer of faculty between campuses.
5. The length of the pretenure probationary period should be not less than five years and not more than seven years.
6. The number of years that an administrator can retain tenure in an instructional department should be limited unless the administrator continues professional activities in teaching and scholarship in a significant way.
7. Establish and maintain proper ratios of tenured to non-tenured faculty. As part of this policy, a certain number of tenured positions need to be available for allocation to any unit where they may be needed or for possible elimination in times of decreasing resources.
8. Encourage faculty members in professional development, either retraining or the enhancement of knowledge in their present fields. Awarding sabbatical leaves is one way to encourage professional development.
9. Develop plans for early retirement and/or reduced service for senior faculty.
10. Consideration of granting tenure to selected part-time faculty members.

Mayhew (1979) stated that there are no easy answers to surviving the eighties. Every dean and department head must take responsibility for the needs of the faculty during this period of stress. In order to better

utilize faculty resources and provide greater management flexibility, Mayhew made the following suggestions:

1. Increase the student-faculty ratios and the size of classes where appropriate.
2. Limit the proliferation of courses.
3. Limit the number of tenured appointments.
4. Use part-time faculty where appropriate.
5. Establish a position control system. Alternatives must be examined before any continuing vacant position or new position is authorized.
6. Every major academic unit should produce the funds necessary to sustain its own program through tuition, contracts, or special programs.

Furniss (1973) emphasized the need for planning--an analysis of the present situation, a projection of the effects of continuing current policies and practices, and a set of projections using alternative policies and practices. The primary level of planning is the department. Each department must set long-term goals. He also suggested selectivity in the granting of tenure, establishing nontenure track classifications, and maintaining a vacant position pool. Flexibility depends on the ability to appoint new faculty.

Atelsek and Gomberg (1980) considered lengthening the probationary period for tenure. In 1978, the average probationary period for pretenured faculty at public universities was 5.4 years.

Simpson (1975) found that tenure ratios could be defined in different ways and offered different pictures of flexibility depending on which definitions were used. He felt that the ratio of all tenured faculty to

all full-time-equivalent (F.T.E.) faculty positions is the best measurement of the ability to hire new faculty.

Mann (1973) introduced the possibility of flexible ranks and suggested that some full professors might want to accept positions with less responsibility at a lower rank to allow time for research or other outside activities.

West (1974) demonstrated the need to assign dollar (salary) values to tenure commitments and to measure these against the salary budget by source of funds for each department. He recommended setting a limit on the financial commitment of tenured appointments against hard (continuous) funds to avoid the pitfall of overcommitments made on the basis of soft (temporary) funds such as contracts and grants.

Mix (1978) found no legal problems in terminating tenured faculty in cases of financial exigency, because the courts have supported the decisions of college administrators. "The defense of tenure as protective of academic freedom has rested on the analysis that identifies such freedom with the first amendment rights, at least in the public sector. Where dismissal is the result of financial exigency, it seems that no such constitutional protection is recognized as yet (p. 11)." Determination of financial exigency rests with the college and university administration, who must demonstrate good faith.

McLane (1979) suggested new roles for senior faculty--continuing education, administration, research, consultation, interdisciplinary courses, replacement of faculty on leave, and visiting appointments at other institutions.

Vacarro (1972) discussed the concept of "Contract for Service" in place of life tenure. He emphasized the importance of understanding the demands that tenure places on the financial resources of the institution.

O'Toole, Van Alstyne, & Chait (1979) reviewed the pros and cons of tenure. Chait reported that nearly 85% of all colleges and universities have tenure

and they employ about 95% of full-time faculty. He believed that the problems associated with tenure are the result of the administration of tenure and not the concept of tenure itself.

Lee and Bowen (1975) reported that the University of Wisconsin was the only multicampus university having actual experience with systemwide tenure. Vacant positions were frozen in order to accept displaced tenured faculty from other campuses whose positions had been eliminated even though tenure policies were in terms of campus-based tenure.

Various planning models have been developed to measure the effects of altering tenure policies. For example, a decision to lower the number of promotions to tenure will increase the rate of faculty turnover and will lower the ratio of tenured faculty to nontenured faculty. Reference is made to Cartter, Allan, & McDowell (1975), Hopkins & Bienenstock (1975), & Luecke (1974).

Exhibit 1 provides a summary of the methods found in the literature review that can be used by administrators to provide flexibility in the management of programs.

Exhibit 1 about here

METHODS REVEALED BY SURVEY OF PUBLIC RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

The highlight of the research on the issue of tenure and management flexibility was the telephone survey of the academic and planning administrators of the main campus of twenty-two leading public research universities.

The institutions surveyed were: University of Colorado, University of Illinois, Indiana University, University of Iowa, Iowa State University, University of Kansas, University of Maryland, University of Michigan,

Michigan State University, University of Minnesota, University of Missouri, University of Nebraska, University of North Carolina, Ohio State University, University of Oregon, Pennsylvania State University, University of Pittsburgh, Purdue University, University of Texas, University of Virginia, University of Washington, and University of Wisconsin.

Each administrator was asked, on an informal basis, to discuss methods used at his or her university to provide faculty tenure and management flexibility.

Interestingly, no one seemed unduly concerned with faculty tenure ratios except at the departmental level.

Every institution felt that faculty tenure was vital and necessary for the preservation of academic freedom and faculty morale. All of the administrators felt that faculty tenure was essential to quality education, not only providing academic freedom--the freedom to teach without fear of reprisals--but also serving as a reward for excellence. It is not unreasonable that faculty members feel entitled to a sense of security after a job well done.

No one suggested tenure quotas at the departmental or campus level.

Every person contacted said that tenure policies need to be clearly stated and that tenure should be awarded only for excellence. All of the universities contacted suggested stretching out the probationary period by not awarding tenure until the seventh year.

One university has altered its tenure policy. Tenure may be denied even in the seventh year if the demand in the faculty member's field does not warrant another tenured faculty member.

Another institution has the policy of hiring a faculty member for as long as five years on a nontenure track appointment. At the end of that time, the same faculty member may be appointed to a tenure track position.

The majority of the public research universities contacted reported a sizeable pool of nontenure track positions to meet changing demands. Faculty members holding these positions are usually called lecturers. The inclusion or exclusion of these nontenure track positions can make a considerable difference in the calculation of tenure ratios, and Table 1 reflects this difference for the twenty-two universities surveyed. Ratios are based on data reported to the National Center for Education Statistics on full-time instructional faculty.

Table 1 about here

Excellence seemed to be the key factor in awarding tenure. One institution reported that it had allowed a department to tenure "one more" excellent faculty member even though the department was already 100% tenured. A department can be allowed one more position on a mortgage basis. As soon as a tenured position becomes vacant, the department loses that position.

Exchanging visiting faculty was suggested to provide new interest for both the faculty member and the department.

Sabbaticals and faculty fellowships were suggested as excellent opportunities for faculty development and possible retraining.

Institutions were expecting a reasonable amount of flexibility through natural attrition.

In order to increase flexibility, faculty members were encouraged to teach courses in other departments in addition to the departments where they held tenure. For example, mathematics professors might also teach courses in computer science.

Administrators did not feel that part-time faculty would meet the requirements of a research university. They reported that graduate students were used to help with instruction on a part-time basis, but that they did not carry major responsibilities.

Only one institution reported significant interest in early retirement plans and that institution provided financial incentives. Most institutions were not able to provide financial incentives and were prohibited by law to encourage early retirement.

An excellent management device reported was a position control system maintained by the chief academic officer. All vacant positions revert to the chief academic officer and are renegotiated for.

Another institution suggested that tenured faculty members be allowed to transfer tenure to another campus in a multicampus system. This policy could provide a refreshing change for the mature faculty member, an experienced faculty member on a newer campus, and a place for a new faculty member on a main campus. The transfer must have the consensus of all three parties--the professor, the main campus, and the newer campus.

Faculty resources have been shared by two campuses of the same institution if they are close enough. The entire business faculty is shared by two campuses of one institution. The dean of the business college is insistent that the students at the sister campus located in a nearby metropolitan area receive education identical to that of the students on the main campus. To implement this policy, every faculty member on the main campus must take his or her turn teaching on the metropolitan campus. Faculty members have expressed real feelings of pleasure and satisfaction in the challenge of teaching on both campuses.

All of the administrators contacted felt that the key to management flexibility was careful planning, through the combined efforts of students, faculty and administrators. It is important that planning begin at the departmental level as each department and each campus has its own set of problems and possible solutions.

Exhibit 2 provides a summary of the methods reported by administrators in the telephone survey to provide flexibility in the management of programs.

Exhibit 2 about here

A comparison is made in Exhibit 3 of the methods found in the literature review, and those methods reported by administrators in the telephone survey. This comparison shows that of the twenty-five methods reported, twenty-one were found in the literature. The following were not:

- o Increase pretenure period to greater than seven years.
- o Deny tenure even in the seventh year in the case of declining demand.
- o Share faculty resources with other departments and/or campuses.
- o A department can be allowed an extra mortgaged position to tenure an excellent faculty member. It loses this position as soon as another tenured position becomes vacant.

The methods mentioned above were reported in the survey of the universities and are perhaps more recent or innovative ideas.

Exhibit 3 also shows nine methods reported in the literature that were not reported in the survey of the universities. These were as follows:

- o Systemwide tenure.
- o Contracts for service.
- o Quotas on tenure

- o Limit tenure for administrators.
- o Flexible ranks.
- o New roles for senior faculty.
- o Increase faculty workload.
- o Increase use of part-time faculty.
- o Every major academic unit should generate its own resources.

Administrators of the research universities indicated that these nine alteratives were not practiced as they could adversely effect the quality of the academic programs.

Exhibit 3 about here

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is concluded that faculty tenure is vital to quality education in public research universities, and that the best method for providing management flexibility is through careful planning. Good planning starts at the departmental level and depends on teamwork of students, faculty and administrators. Each institution, and each department within each institution , is unique. Planning involves an understanding of the role and mission of the institution, an assessment of each department--its strengths and weaknesses, and discovering ways to improve the quality of programs within the constraints of the budget. To be of value, planning must be implemented through the budget process.

This study found methods for dealing with high-tenure ratios and management flexibility at major research universities. It is recommended that the interested researcher conduct a similar survey of a "peer" group of his or her institution in order to determine what methods can provide viable solutions to its particular flexibility problems.

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Table 1

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON FULL-TIME FACULTY TENURE RATIOS
AT TWENTY-TWO PUBLIC RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES[a,c]
Fall 1980

	Ratio #1 Ranked Faculty with Tenure: Total Ranked Faculty	Ratio #2[b] Total Faculty with Tenure: Total Faculty Reported
1.	.82	.82
2.	.78	.78
3.	.78	.77
4.	.78	.78
5.	.77	.73
6.	.76	.71
7.	.74	.74
8.	.73	.73
9.	.72	.71
10.	.71	.71
11.	.70	.70
12.	.70	.67
13.	.69	.69
14.	.68	.66
15.	.67	.67
16.	.67	.67
17.	.66	.66
18.	.66	.63
19.	.66	.57
20.	.62	.58
21.	.61	.59
22.	.58	.57

[a]Report includes the main campus of the following institutions: University of Colorado, University of Illinois, Indiana University, University of Iowa, Iowa State University, University of Kansas, University of Maryland, University of Michigan, Michigan State University, University of Minnesota, University of Missouri, University of Nebraska, University of North Carolina, Ohio State University, University of Oregon, Pennsylvania State University, University of Pittsburgh, Purdue University, University of Texas, University of Virginia, University of Washington, and University of Wisconsin.

[b]Ratio #2 includes faculty without rank, most of whom are not eligible for tenure. Ratio #2 is the same as Ratio #1 for those universities not reporting faculty without rank.

[c]Source of data: Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS XV), Salaries, Tenure, and Fringe Benefits of Full-Time Instructional Faculty, 1980-81.

Exhibit 1

METHODS TO PROVIDE MANAGEMENT FLEXIBILITY
LITERATURE REVIEW

- PLANNING
- PLANNING MODELS
- CAMPUS LEVEL CONTROL
- CAMPUS LEVEL TENURE
- INCREASE SELECTIVITY IN PROMOTIONS TO TENURE
- NONTENURE TRACK POSITIONS
- POSITION CONTROL AND VACANT POSITION POOL
- EARLY RETIREMENT FOR SENIOR FACULTY
- REDUCED WORKLOADS FOR SENIOR FACULTY
- TRANSFERS BETWEEN CAMPUSES
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- SYSTEMWIDE TENURE
- CONTRACTS IN LIEU OF LIFETIME TENURE
- SET QUOTAS ON TENURE
- LIMIT TENURE IN INSTRUCTIONAL DEPARTMENTS FOR ADMINISTRATORS
- FLEXIBLE RANKS
- NEW ROLES FOR SENIOR FACULTY
- INCREASE FACULTY WORKLOAD
- INCREASE USE OF PART-TIME FACULTY
- EVERY MAJOR ACADEMIC UNIT SHOULD GENERATE ITS OWN RESOURCES THROUGH TUITION, CONTRACTS AND GRANTS, OR SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Exhibit 2

METHODS TO PROVIDE MANAGEMENT FLEXIBILITY
TELEPHONE SURVEY
ADMINISTRATORS AT TWENTY-TWO PUBLIC RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

- o PLANNING
- o PLANNING MODELS
- o CAMPUS LEVEL CONTROL
- o CAMPUS LEVEL TENURE
- o INCREASE SELECTIVITY IN PROMOTIONS TO TENURE
- o NONTENURE TRACK POSITIONS
- o POSITION CONTROL AND VACANT POSITION POOL
- o INCREASE PRETENURE PERIOD
- o EARLY RETIREMENT FOR SENIOR FACULTY
- o REDUCED WORKLOADS FOR SENIOR FACULTY
- o TRANSFERS BETWEEN CAMPUSES
- o PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- o INCREASE PRETENURE PERIOD TO GREATER THAN SEVEN YEARS
- o DENY TENURE EVEN IN THE SEVENTH YEAR
- o SHARED FACULTY RESOURCES
- o MORTGAGED POSITIONS

Exhibit 3

COMPARISON OF METHODS REPORTED TO PROVIDE MANAGEMENT FLEXIBILITY
LITERATURE REVIEW AND PUBLIC RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES SURVEYED

	LITERATURE		UNIVERSITIES	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
o PLANNING	XX		XX	
o PLANNING MODELS	XX		XX	
o CAMPUS LEVEL CONTROL	XX		XX	
o CAMPUS LEVEL TENURE	XX		XX	
o INCREASE SELECTIVITY IN PROMOTIONS TO TENURE	XX		XX	
o NONTENURE TRACK POSITIONS	XX		XX	
o POSITION CONTROL AND VACANT POSITION POOL	XX		XX	
o INCREASE PRETENURE PERIOD	XX		XX	
o EARLY RETIREMENT FOR SENIOR FACULTY	XX		XX	
o REDUCED WORKLOADS FOR SENIOR FACULTY	XX		XX	
o TRANSFERS BETWEEN CAMPUSES	XX		XX	
o PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	XX		XX	
o SYSTEMWIDE TENURE	XX			XX
o CONTRACTS FOR SERVICE IN LIEU OF LIFETIME TENURE	XX			XX
o SET QUOTAS ON TENURE	XX			XX
o LIMIT TENURE FOR ADMINISTRATORS	XX			XX
o FLEXIBLE RANKS	XX			XX
o NEW ROLES FOR SENIOR FACULTY	XX			XX
o INCREASE FACULTY WORKLOAD	XX			XX
o INCREASE USE OF PART-TIME FACULTY	XX			XX
o EVERY MAJOR ACADEMIC UNIT SHOULD GENERATE ITS OWN RESOURCES THROUGH TUITION, CONTRACTS AND GRANTS, OR SPECIAL PROGRAMS	XX			XX
o INCREASE PRETENURE PERIOD TO GREATER THAN SEVEN YEARS		XX	XX	
o DENY TENURE EVEN IN THE SEVENTH YEAR		XX	XX	
o SHARED FACULTY RESOURCES		XX	XX	
o MORTGAGED POSITIONS		XX	XX	

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